

Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Building Futures, a Providence-based work training program that prepares Rhode Islanders for careers in the construction industry. This program has made a real difference in the lives of 145 Rhode Islanders by placing them in registered apprenticeships as bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and other construction trade apprenticeships. This success is due, in large part, to its dedicated and talented staff, led by director and founder Andrew Cortes.

I was pleased to stand with Andrew as mayor of Providence in 2007 to help launch Building Futures, which has become a national model for work training programs, and recently to be with him and many others to celebrate their success at Building Futures and to hear directly from so many who have benefited from this program who are now holding good-paying jobs in my State.

Addressing the skills gap is one of Rhode Island's and our Nation's most pressing challenges. We know that too many people are searching for good-paying jobs, but too often, even though they are hardworking, they lack the particular skills they need for the jobs that are available.

Building Futures is helping to restore opportunity by bridging the skills gap and strengthening Rhode Island's workforce. Today, I am proud to salute their efforts and congratulate them on a job well done.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Speaker, I think what we are engaging on today has the potential of being truly historic. We need a vote on immigration reform.

Several weeks ago, I was home in the district I represent. I go home every week. The Secretary of Commerce was visiting in Silicon Valley. She gave a good speech. After she finished her speech, she invited questions. The very first question was from a young man—a scientist—who said this:

I started a company. I am about to hire four Americans. But my visa is up next month. What am I supposed to do?

As I was talking to that young man, another young man came forward—another scientist who has just formed a company. He is about to go into a hiring mode, but his visa was about up.

So when you take a look and listen to the people in Silicon Valley saying we are going to lose jobs in America because we have a dysfunctional immigration system, that shows the problem that we have allowed to fester.

Recently, I met with farmers. They told me that they are not planting crops this year because they can't identify who is going to pick those crops.

About 80 percent of the migrant farmworkers in America are here without their proper documents. Do I think that is a good situation? No, I do not.

A number of years ago, when I chaired the Immigration Subcommittee, we had a wonderful witness, Dr. Richard Land, then the head of the Southern Baptist Convention, and this was his testimony. He said:

We had for many years two signs at the southern border. One sign said, "No Trespassing," and the other sign said, "Help Wanted."

Those farmworkers who are here picking the vegetables that we will enjoy at our meals responded to that "Help Wanted" sign.

Sometimes people say you should do it in the legal way. Get to the end of the line. And this is from someone who was a former immigration lawyer. I used to teach immigration law at the University of Santa Clara. The truth is, there is no line to get into. We have created a dysfunctional system that does not serve American interests.

H.R. 15 is not a perfect bill. No piece of legislation is. But it was a bill that attracted broad bipartisan support in the United States Senate.

This discharge petition says just one thing: Let's have a vote. Why would the Speaker of the House and the Republican leadership refuse to allow this body to have an up-or-down vote on that bill?

A discharge petition is something that has been in the rules of the House for many, many decades. It has been used occasionally in the past to actually un-bottle-up bills that the leadership didn't want the body to vote on. Most recently, campaign finance reform came to the floor of the House because of a discharge petition.

A lot of Members of the House say that they favor immigration reform. Here is an opportunity to hold every Member of this House accountable. If you favor reform of the immigration system, you should favor having an up-or-down vote on H.R. 15. If you favor an up-or-down vote, we expect you, no matter what your party designation, to sign this discharge petition so the House of Representatives may have an opportunity to address this question and vote "yes" or "no" on this bill.

I hope that members of the public who are aware of the need for immigration reform to reform a system that is not serving our economic interests, that is breaking up families and leaving children in foster care while their parents are deported, will call their Members of the House of Representatives and ask them to sign this discharge petition. It is in the rules. It is what we expect.

We need a vote.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for

joining me here today, as well as those advocates tirelessly working for comprehensive immigration reform.

Nine months have passed since the Senate moved on a strongly bipartisan comprehensive immigration bill. In that time, we have heard nothing but excuses and empty promises from the Speaker.

Yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office confirmed what so many of us already know: immigration is a boon for our economy. It will reduce the deficit by nearly \$1 trillion, raise wages, and increase the Nation's productivity. It will make our country richer and create opportunity for all. But because the Speaker refuses to give us a vote, we have seen more families ripped apart, more jobs go overseas, and more people get stuck in a broken, outdated, and inefficient system.

We can't afford to wait any longer for this House to take up immigration reform. The time has come to move this forward.

Immigration reform isn't just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. Our country needs it, the American people support it, and there are enough votes today in the House of Representatives to pass it.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in signing the discharge petition so we can finally bring immigration reform to a vote.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, this week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office told us that the bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation in this House, H.R. 15, will reduce the deficit by \$900 billion over the next 20 years—\$200 billion in the first decade alone.

In today's economy, immigration reform is a vital lifeblood. By adding 11 million to our workforce here in the United States, our economy will continue driving our recovery. This influx of workers will increase consumption, pushing businesses to grow and hire more employees to meet their new consumers' needs.

Thanks to the Congressional Budget Office's report, we are reminded that bringing 11 million hardworking men and women out of the shadows is not simply a moral battle, it is not only an attempt to legalize millions of hardworking people who are already here in our country, it is an opportunity for us to create employment for our fellow Americans. It will supercharge the economy of this great Nation.

I think it is important for all of America to understand that comprehensive immigration reform is the best thing that we can do for our economy. The economists have reminded us of that. But, unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, what stands in the way is a

decision by the Speaker of this House to just offer the opportunity to put that bill on this floor so that we as Members of Congress can vote on this legislation.

Should it pass, should it fail, that is the objective as to why we are elected to this House—so that we can debate, so that we can deliberate, so that we can help make decisions that move this country forward.

All we are asking is that we have the opportunity to vote on the floor of the United States Congress on a bill, an issue, that will unleash this economy, and that is something that I think every American wants to see happen.

We have millions of Americans who are out of work. Some have been out of work for years. This comprehensive immigration reform will unleash this economy and create more jobs for American citizens more than anything that this Congress can do today.

I think it is incumbent upon every American to urge your congressional Member to vote on comprehensive immigration reform. Should they choose to vote “no” or choose to vote “yes,” that is the prerogative of that elected official. Unfortunately, the Speaker of this House will not give us that opportunity.

Once again, Americans, the best thing that we can do as a country is to get our economy back on track and allow hardworking Americans the opportunity to go back to work, to have the dignity of bringing home a paycheck for them and their families.

Comprehensive immigration reform is that answer. The economists have said so. But, unfortunately, some politicians refuse to face reality and refuse to supercharge the American economy. We are just one vote away, one opportunity away, from doing that.

□ 1115

WHAT WE KNOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, last week, the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences released a new report titled “What We Know.”

The report states unequivocally that climate change is a scientific fact, that human activity is linked to climate change, and that, if we do not act soon, the problem will get far worse and more expensive for us to deal with.

This is not a super-PAC or a political association tied to a candidate or to a group of scientists. This is a group of scientists representing the leading experts in their fields, and they are speaking to us in one unified voice.

In Georgia, agriculture is our State’s number one industry; and yet, as damaging and unpredictable as the weather patterns are making life difficult for our farmers, Republicans in our State suggest that the science is not well settled.

Madam Speaker, I hope that they get a chance to read this latest evidence. The science is settled. The only debate that remains is whether or not we will take action before it is too late.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 25, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 25, 2014 at 5:54 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4275.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o’clock and 16 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Jonathan Weaver, Greater Mt. Nebo AME Church, Bowie, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

To You, O Lord, the God of the universe and the author and finisher of life, we come today expressing our thanks for all that You have done for us, not just within the last few moments, but over the sweep of our lives, the triumphs as well as the turmoil.

We pray that as the Members of Congress deliberate today, grant them even greater wisdom so that their actions will honor You in what they do to serve the people they represent.

Help all of us to continue to look beyond ourselves and our personal interests and to seek ways to make life better for those around us, both near and far.

I pray that even with and through our differences, that You will unite us as a people, so that our Nation will continue to prosper and honor You.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day’s proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker’s approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker’s approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND JONATHAN WEAVER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor this morning to express the gratitude of the House for this morning’s opening prayer by one of Maryland’s most dynamic and inspirational faith leaders, my dear friend, Pastor Jonathan Leslie Weaver.

Pastor Weaver likes to share with visitors to his church this verse from Psalms 68: “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.”

For the past 25 years, Mr. Speaker, Reverend Weaver has been sharing the benefits of his care and his wisdom with his flock at Greater Mt. Nebo African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bowie, Maryland.

Pastor Weaver has overseen its growth from 100 members in 1988 to more than 1,600 today. It now has more than 50 ministries serving the church and our wider community.

Under the pastor’s leadership, the church is engaged in numerous charitable works, including reentry programs, community-based violence prevention, and antihunger projects.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Pastor Weaver has been at the center of an economic empowerment effort which has advantaged literally tens of thousands of people in our area and now has five chapters throughout our country.

I thank Pastor Weaver, along with his wife, Pamela, for their many years